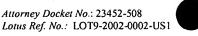What Is Claimed Is:

1.   A method for mining e-mails to determine a user's affinities, comprising:

accessing an e-mail system and retrieving from the system the e-mails sent to and from the user;

extracting keywords from the retrieved e-mails; —

generating a list of categories based on the extracted keywords;

accessing a master category list;

filtering the generated category list by removing from the generated list those categories that are not included in the master category list; and

for each category remaining in the generated category list, calculating an affinity value and associating the affinity value with the category, wherein the affinity value represent the strength of the user's relationship to the category.

2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of submitting a proposed user affinity for publication, wherein the proposed user affinity includes one of the categories from the generated category list and the affinity value associated with the category.

3.   The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of determining an affinity value threshold.

4.   The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of determining whether the affinity value included in the proposed user affinity exceeds the affinity value threshold.

5.   The method of claim 4, wherein if the affinity value included in the proposed user affinity does not exceed the affinity value threshold, then the proposed user affinity is not published.

6.   The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of publishing the proposed user affinity if it is determined that the affinity value included in the proposed user affinity exceeds the affinity value threshold.

7.   The method of claim 4, further comprising the steps of notifying the user of the proposed user affinity and requesting from the user a response that indicates whether or not the user wishes to have the proposed user affinity published if it is determined that the affinity value included in the proposed user affinity exceeds the affinity value threshold.

8.   The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of publishing the proposed user affinity if the user does not respond to the request for a response within a predetermined amount of time.

9.   The method of claim 7, further comprising the steps of:

receiving the response from the user;

determining whether the response indicates that the user wishes to have the proposed user affinity published; and

publishing the proposed user affinity if it is determined that the response indicates that the user wishes to have the proposed user affinity published.

10.   The method of claim 6, wherein the step of publishing the proposed user affinity comprises the step of updating a profile associated with the user such that the profile indicates that the user has an affinity for the category included in the proposed user affinity.

11.   A system for mining e-mails to determine a user's affinities, comprising:

means for accessing an e-mail system and retrieving from the system the e-mails sent to and from the user;

means for extracting keywords from the retrieved e-mails;

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means for generating a list of categories based on the extracted keywords;

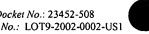means for accessing a master category list;

means for filtering the generated category list by removing from the generated list those categories that are not included in the master category list; and

means for calculating an affinity value for each category remaining in the generated category list, wherein the affinity value represent the strength of the user's relationship to the category.

12.   The system of claim 11, further comprising an affinity publisher module for receiving a proposed user affinity, wherein the proposed user affinity includes one of the categories from the generated category list and the calculated affinity value associated with the category.

13.   The system of claim 12, further comprising an affinity publication policy that defines an affinity value threshold.

14.   The system of claim 13, wherein the affinity publisher module comprises means for determining whether the affinity value included in the proposed user affinity exceeds the affinity value threshold.

15.   The system of claim 14, wherein if the affinity value included in the proposed user affinity does not exceed the affinity value threshold, then the affinity publish module will not publish the proposed user affinity.

16.   The system of claim 14, wherein the affinity publisher module will publish the proposed user affinity if it is determined that the affinity value included in the proposed user affinity exceeds the affinity value threshold.

17.   The system of claim 14, further comprising means for notifying the user of the proposed user affinity and means for requesting from the user a response that

indicates whether or not the user wishes to have the proposed user affinity published.

18. The system of claim 17, further comprising means for determining whether the user has not responded to the request within a predetermined amount of time.

19. The system of claim 17, further comprising:

means for receiving the response from the user;

means for determining whether the response indicates that the user wishes to have the proposed user affinity published; and

publishing means for publishing the proposed user affinity, wherein, if it is determined that the response indicates that the user wishes to have the proposed user affinity published, the publishing means will publish the proposed user affinity.

20. The system of claim 16, wherein the affinity publisher module publishes the proposed user affinity by updating a profile associated with the user such that the profile indicates that the user has an affinity for the category included in the proposed user affinity.

21. A computer program product for mining e-mails to determine a user's affinities, the computer program product being embodied in a computer readable medium and comprising computer instructions for:

accessing an e-mail system and retrieving from the system the e-mails sent to and from the user;

extracting keywords from the retrieved e-mails;

generating a list of categories based on the extracted keywords;

accessing a master category list;

filtering the generated category list by removing from the generated list those categories that are not included in the master category list; and

for each category remaining in the generated category list, calculating an affinity

value and associating the affinity value with the category, wherein the affinity value represent the strength of the user's relationship to the category.

22. The computer program product claim 21, further comprising computer instructions for submitting a proposed user affinity for publication, wherein the proposed user affinity includes one of the categories from the generated category list and the affinity value associated with the category.

23. The computer program product claim 22, further comprising computer instructions for determining an affinity value threshold.

24. The computer program product claim 23, further comprising computer instructions for determining whether the affinity value included in the proposed user affinity exceeds the affinity value threshold.

25. The computer program product claim 24, wherein if the affinity value included in the proposed user affinity does not exceed the affinity value threshold, then the proposed user affinity is not published.

26. The computer program product claim 24, further comprising computer instructions for publishing the proposed user affinity if it is determined that the affinity value included in the proposed user affinity exceeds the affinity value threshold.

27. The computer program product claim 24, further comprising computer instructions for notifying the user of the proposed user affinity and requesting from the user a response that indicates whether or not the user wishes to have the proposed user affinity published if it is determined that the affinity value included in the proposed user affinity exceeds the affinity value threshold.

28. The computer program product claim 27, further comprising computer

instructions for publishing the proposed user affinity if the user does not respond to the request for a response within a predetermined amount of time.

29.   The computer program product claim 27, further comprising computer instructions for:

receiving the response from the user;

determining whether the response indicates that the user wishes to have the proposed user affinity published; and

publishing the proposed user affinity if it is determined that the response indicates that the user wishes to have the proposed user affinity published.

30.   The computer program product claim 26, wherein the computer instructions for publishing the proposed user affinity comprises computer instructions for updating a profile associated with the user such that the profile indicates that the user has an affinity for the category included in the proposed user affinity.

31.   A computer signal embodied in a carrier wave readable by a computing system and encoding a computer program of instructions for executing a computer process performing the method recited in claim 1.